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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 GUATEMALA 000929

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HARARE FOR WHARTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [GT](#) [UN](#) [OAS](#)

SUBJECT: NGOS UPBEAT ON CICIACS DEVELOPMENTS

REF: A. GUATEMALA 890

[1](#)B. STATE 77340

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: Embassy officers met with human rights activists Frank LaRue, Claudia Samayoa, and Orlando Blanco on April 2 to discuss both the recent protest by human rights groups in front of the Embassy and their silence on Cuban dissident jailing (Ref A), as well as steps that the Embassy can take to help the NGOs move the Commission to Investigate Illegal Bodies and the Clandestine Security Apparatus (CICIACS) proposal forward. Embassy officers offered technical expertise to help NGOs analyze investigative models of possible use to the CICIACS. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) On April 2, representatives from POL, NAS, ICITAP, AID, and RSO met with human rights activists to address questions emerging from DAS Fisk's meeting with Jose Miguel Vivanco (Ref B), and to demonstrate our continuing moral and technical support for the NGOs as they push the formation of the CICIACS forward. We discussed the commission set-up, the NGO's latest dealings with the GOG, the budget progress, the commission candidates, and further steps for Embassy-NGO collaboration.

From Here to September: A Cloudy Process

[1](#)3. (U) According to LaRue (and confirmed to us by the MFA), the GOG has appointed former Ambassador to the Court of St. James, Maritza Ruiz de Vielman to handle GOG negotiations with the UN and the OAS for the creation of the CICIACS. Ruiz de Vielman drafted an initial agreement in which the GOG would establish the CICIACS under the Secretary of Peace (SEPAZ), a domestic institution in which the NGOs have little confidence. The Human Rights Ombudsman communicated with FM Gutierrez to say that the NGOs were not supportive of that idea and that the CICIACS had to be set up as an international commission for the NGOs and the international community to support it. Gutierrez reportedly agreed, saying that Ruiz de Vielman misunderstood the March 13 agreement from which she drew her proposal, and that the GOG also wants an international commission. To that end, Gutierrez sent Ruiz de Vielman to New York on April 1, to lobby the UN and start the official exchange of letters.

[1](#)4. (U) As NGOs understand the situation, the GOG and the UN and OAS will now exchange letters proposing a joint commission, and this series of agreements will then be submitted to Congress for ratification. The NGOs have heard that commissions of this size need only the approval of the Secretaries General of the UN and OAS, and need not be

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submitted to these organizations' general assemblies. The NGO representatives also told us that they have heard that both UN SecGen Annan and OAS SecGen Gaviria are already on board in support of CICIACS.

Budget Progress

[1](#)5. (U) The NGOs have delayed further work on the CICIACS budget, instead choosing to focus their energies on the set-up of the commission. Once the UN and the OAS have confirmed their involvement, and agreed on the scope, mandate, and timing of the CICIACS, the NGOs hope that these organizations will provide fiscal experts to help them develop a realistic budget.

Commission Candidates

[1](#)6. (U) Human rights activists Nery Rodenas and Orlando Blanco are traveling to the UN and the OAS on April 9 to present their ideas for candidates for the commission and to solicit feedback. Frank LaRue told DCM and PolOffs that their top choices currently are Peruvians Jose Ugaz and Gino Costa. LaRue separately told the Ambassador that they were also considering Guatemalan Ramon Cadena, whom the Attorney General said was his choice to replace Tatiana Morales as Human Rights Prosecutor in the Public Ministry. (Note: LaRue doubted that Cadena would accept a job offer from De Leon. End Note.)

#### Next Steps

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17. (U) The NGOs have items that they would like to discuss with Embassy experts in the future. Many of them have to do with the role of the Public Ministry, including how the CICIACS will provide protection for the special prosecutor appointed by the Attorney General, how the CICIACS will help improve the Public Ministry, and how the CICIACS will protect witnesses and investigators. The NGOs also wondered if we had any advice on how to mount a public relations campaign to help educate the average Guatemalan about clandestine groups and the aims of CICIACS. NGOs intend to contact the Embassy to discuss this after the official exchange of letters between the UN, OAS, and GOG.

#### Comment

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18. (U) The NGOs were appreciative of our continued support. They trust the GOG's interlocutor, Ruiz de Vielman, and are hopeful that the commission set-up will proceed along the lines they envisioned. We will continue our support and inform the Department about further requests for collaboration. End Comment.  
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